COMMUNITY NEWS

SciAd success

NASA JSC Photo 2000-04745 by James Blair

JSC volunteers celebrate the completion of the first year for the Science Advisor Program at JSC. Center Director George Abbey personally thanked and congratulated all the volunteers at a reception at the Gilruth Center earlier this month.

Volunteers in JSC's Science Advisor Program were recently recognized at a ceremony celebrating the completion of the pilot program's first year. One hundred employees volunteered throughout the 1999/2000 school year as part of the new educational outreach program, which is already registering volunteers for the following school year.

"It is very rewarding to work with young people as you have and I think it is really going to mean a lot to our future because they represent our future," said Center Director George Abbey. "If we can get students interested in math, science and engineering, we're going to ensure that we have young people who are going to be able to carry the vision on and do what we have to do during the coming years. You have made a difference and that is important. So thank you for a job well done."

The SciAd program, which White Sands Test Facility pioneered for NASA, is designed to serve as a resource for teachers. Through SciAd, JSC volunteers can help design science experiments and lesson plans, prepare labs or even help with computer equipment.

"The SciAd program promotes an awareness of science that is very important," said Sybil Littlejohn, a third grade teacher at Ward Elementary School and science coordinator for grades three through five. "It also brings in excellent role models – real people with real jobs in these fields for the students to meet."

Littlejohn and Alice Prisk, a second grade teacher at Ward Elementary School, attended the event to personally thank the SciAds for their work. Ward's SciAds served as science fair judges, assisted with a student robotics competition team, and developed hands-on activities designed to spark students' interests in physical and life sciences topics.

"Our SciAds in particular were very good at getting the students involved," added Prisk. "They let them figure out what the experiment was about and let them make mistakes. It really kept their interest."

"We really appreciated their enthusiasm," said Littlejohn. "Any time a visitor has a lot of enthusiasm it gets carried over to the students, and even to ourselves."

Many SciAds said they were glad they had participated and felt good to be contributing to the development of future scientists and engineers.

Dena Haynes, a JSC employee and SciAd at Ross Elementary School, who is the mother of a kindergartner at the school where she volunteered, said she was appreciative of the opportunity to be involved with their education.

"I felt this was a good way to participate and I think the students thought it was neat to see someone they know in the classroom," said Haynes, who was able to use her electrical engineering expertise while helping with the first robotics competition and electronic circuitry experiments. "The students really responded and wanted to know how they could do more at home."

All Clear Creek Independent School District elementary schools and intermediate schools are part of the JSC SciAd program. Phase Two of the program invites JSC contractor companies to launch their own SciAd programs with surrounding school districts.

"This was an excellent year for the pilot program," said Susan Braymer, SciAd steering committee chair and deputy director of Human Resources. "Based on this year's experience, we look forward to enhancing the 2000/2001 program with CCISD."

Organizers are currently recruiting civil servant volunteers for the 2000 – 2001 school year. Each SciAd is allowed eight hours of duty time per month to support their school. Individuals interested may apply online by visiting the SciAd Web site at hro.jsc.nasa.gov\SCIAD. While applications will be accepted continuously, selections for the fall will be made from applications submitted by July 21. ■

Volunteer effort key to successful Open House 2000

Center preparations continue for the fifth annual Open House set for Saturday, August 26

About 400 volunteers are needed to prepare for the anticipated 120,000 Open House guests. Civil service and contractor volunteers are needed to staff information booths, act as rovers, assist visitors with directions, staff the lost child care center, help keep the cafeterias clean during peak times, oversee children's activities at the Teague Auditorium, and handle crowd control in the International Space Station trailer.

"The volunteers' effort is crucial to the success of the day," said C.C. de la Garza, volunteer coordinator for Open House 2000. "Please take the time to support this exciting event. Open House provides all employees the opportunity to personally share the excitement shown by the many visitors who spend the day at JSC."

NASA and contractor retirees are invited to volunteer in this effort. There is a special need for bilingual volunteers and individuals willing to work afternoon time slots. All volunteers will attend training sessions, which will be scheduled at a later date and will be announced in the *Roundup*.

The easiest way to sign up is by pointing your browser to http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/openhouse/Databases/ and selecting the time and position you would like to work. For more information, contact de la Garza at x31033.

Open House, which begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m., is free to the public. Visitors may enter the center through three gates not normally open to the public – on NASA Road 1 just east of Saturn Boulevard, on Space Center Boulevard near Bay Area Boulevard, and on Space Center Boulevard near NASA Road 1. Parking in JSC lots is available at no charge.

"We are looking forward again this year to hosting the public at the Johnson Space Center," said JSC Director George W. S. Abbey. "We hope everyone will enjoy both the opportunity to meet the dedicated women and men who work here and the chance to learn how their investment in the space program makes it possible for us to continue our advances in space exploration while at the same time providing real benefits to our lives here on Earth."

Visitors check out the shuttle mockup in Bldg. 9 during last year's Open House.

Exhibits and hardware from all of JSC's various programs will be featured in more than 19 buildings throughout the center. In addition, tours will be provided of the Sonny Carter Training Facility, where astronauts train for space walks in the largest indoor "pool" in the world, as well as Ellington Field, where NASA training jets, Shuttle Training Aircraft and the KC-135 weightless trainer are housed.

Visitors will be able to tour Mission Control to see both the space shuttle and the International Space Station flight control rooms. This facility is the nerve center for human space flight operations and served as the model for the new echocardiography lab at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston where noninvasive tests are performed using ultrasound to examine the structure and functioning of the heart for abnormalities and disease.

In Bldg. 9, at the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility, visitors can see a full-size version of the first and only reusable spacecraft ever built – the space shuttle – which in the past year conducted a variety of missions including the deployment of the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, a servicing call to the Hubble Space Telescope, a radar mapping mission that covered more than 47 million square miles of the Earth's surface, and, most recently, a return to the International Space Station to prepare it for the arrival of the next major station component, the Zvezda Service Module.

Building 9 also contains full-size mockups of the Zvezda module along with other major components of the International Space Station.

NASA astronauts will be on hand throughout the day to provide autographs in several buildings, including both JSC cafeterias and Ellington Field. Food, beverages and souvenirs will be available for purchase as well around the center.

Other facilities used for research in advanced technologies involving composite materials, plant growth, life support systems, global positioning systems and physiological studies will be open to the public.

Two new spacecraft under development at JSC – NASA's X-38 vehicle, which will be available to return crews from the International Space Station, and the inflatable TransHab module, proposed for crew habitation on the station – will also be on display.

JSC's annual Open House coincides with the annual Ballunar Liftoff Festival, a three-day event sponsored by local communities and held on the NASA grounds. The festival includes more than 100 hot air balloons, midway rides, games, skydiving exhibitions and other displays. Festival cost is $3 for adults. Children under 12 are admitted free.

For more information on this year's Open House event, visit the JSC Web site at http://openhouse.jsc.nasa.gov/ or call the information hotline at 281-244-5312. ■